

QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE - MINNESOTA

Welcome & Thank you for your interest
in QPI-MN!

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QPI-MN: IMPROVING BIRTH FAMILY- FOSTER PARENT CONNECTIONS DURING OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT

LEARNINGSTODAY:

- PRINCIPLES AND ELEMENTS OF QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE
- QPI BEGINNINGS IN MINNESOTA
- HOW IMPROVING CONNECTIONS OF BIRTH FAMILY & FOSTER FAMILY SUPPORTS THE EXPERIENCE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT

QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE

- The Quality Parenting Initiative, a strategy of the Youth Law Center, is an approach to strengthening foster care, refocusing on excellent parenting for all children in the child welfare system.
- Launched in 2008 in Florida and has been implemented in over 70 jurisdictions in 10 states (California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin).
- When QPI is successful, caregivers have a voice.

QPI – FIVE CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Excellent parenting is the most important service we can provide to children and youth in care. Children need families, not beds;
2. Child development and trauma research indicates that children need constant, consistent, effective parenting to grow and reach their full potential;
3. Each community must define excellent parenting for itself;
4. Policy and practice must be changed to align with that definition;and;
5. Participants in the system are in the best position to recommend and implement that change.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE QPI APPROACH

1. Defining the expectations of caregivers;
2. Clearly communicating expectations (the Brand statement) to staff, caregivers and other stakeholder and;
3. Aligning system policy and practice with those expectations.

QPI: INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS & PARTICIPANTS

- Anyone who is invested in positive outcomes for children and families in our community can be involved in this initiative;
- Parents and professionals connected to the child welfare system;
- Foster and relative caregivers, foster youth and alumni;
- Individuals from diverse communities that experience disparities within the system, advocates for children and families, judicial and legislative representatives.

MINNESOTA & QPI

INITIAL STEPS

- 2016-2017: Private Foster Care Agencies that are members of AspireMN gathered to learn more about QPI (AspireMN: An association of resources and advocacy for children, youth and families)
- June 2017: Design-Day to plan the Minnesota Kick-Off of QPI
- September-October 2017: QPI Learning sessions across the community offered
- October 2017: QPI-MN Kick-Off held with over 200 participants with the goal to talk develop strategies for creating change to improve the foster care experience for children and families in Minnesota.

MINNESOTA & QPI: IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS BY PRIVATE FOSTER CARE AGENCY MEMBERS OF ASPIREMN

Original Goal:

*building solid foundations to
collaborate to serve kids and
remembering that the heart of the
system is the child/youth and
families*

- **Poor outcomes for children:** high re-entry rates, over representation of children of color in care, failed pre-adoptive or adoptive placements, youth aging out to homelessness
- **Lack of access to resources:** for the child/youth - mental health, physical health, dental, transportation, preserving community or familial connections & for the foster provider - training access, respite services, 24/7 support, transportation, navigating educational system
- **Lack of uniform standards:** discrepancy in County licensing, case management and support practices vs private agency expectations re: case load sizes, birth family engagement & variability in interpretation of licensing standards based on licensor
- **Lack of information sharing:** current model of a “silo system” preventing information exchange across systems including real time information about birth families and the child’s needs given to the foster parent, lack of information about the child’s placement to the birth family
- **Negative community images of foster care:** invisibility of kids and youth in care and isolation of kids and youth in care (stigma, dehumanizing), foster parents image as either on a pedestal or only in it for the money, impact on the ability of the broader community to see themselves as a foster parent

QPI MINNESOTA VALUES

DEVELOPED AT THE OCTOBER 2017 KICK-OFF

- Children and youth develop and grow through love and support of their families and communities.
- Communities and system partners collaborate and drive best practice and best interests of our children and youth.
- Foster parents are respected partners who advocate and collaborate for the wellbeing of the child/youth and their birth family and relatives.
- Birth families, relatives and foster parents connect and create mutually healthy relationships to care for children and youth.



QPI-MN ACTION WORK GROUPS

Resources - Beginning with foster parents create easier connection to key resources to support parenting – including an FAQ about exiting resources

Language - Bring new understanding and sensitivity to all stakeholders by articulating preferred and healing words to be used that emphasize strengths and support the value of children, youth and all families

Kinship - Learn from kinship families what information would have been helpful to have at time of placement – including training. Create steps to assure kinship placements are more actively supported.

Transitions - Supporting positive transitions to and between placements, goal of creating a best practice checklist for all transitions



QPI-MN ACTION WORK GROUPS

Recruitment - Help agencies refer potential foster parents to the agency that will best be suited to support each foster family based on interests, geography, skills

Chain of Command - Creating clarity in the chain of command for decision-making and support for foster parents, birth parents, and youth.

Information Sharing - Assuring foster and birth families are given vital information at placement to comfort and support the child/youth and establish connection between foster and birth families.

Connections: Birth Parents, Foster Parents & Siblings - Refocus attention on strong connections between birth and foster parents, siblings and children/youth in care.



QPI-MN PRIORITIES FOR 2018

- A comfort call to the birth family within twenty-four hours of the child or youth entering a foster home
- Birth and foster families meet within the first weeks to develop a relationship, share information, and work together to meet the child or youth's needs
- Integrating the importance of child and youth voice into all interactions

CONNECTIONS:

BIRTH PARENTS, FOSTER PARENTS & SIBLINGS

- CO-CHAIRS: JANE SHERMAN, LISW & LISA DEPUTIE
- ACTION WORK GROUP GOAL: REFOCUS ATTENTION ON STRONG CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BIRTH AND FOSTER PARENTS, SIBLINGS AND CHILDREN/YOUTH IN CARE.

COMFORT CALL: FIRST CONTACT BETWEEN CAREGIVERS

- DESIGNED TO FOSTER CO-PARENTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL PARENTS AND FOSTER PARENTS.
- TO BE HELD WITHIN THE FIRST 48 HOURS OF PLACEMENT.
- PURPOSE IS FOR BIO PARENT TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE FOSTER HOME AND FOSTER PARENT TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE CHILD THAT IS IN THEIR HOME.
- ENCOURAGES A JOINING OF PARENTS AND CAN HELP CREATE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR THE CHILD AND PARENTS.

BIRTH FAMILY – FOSTER PARENT MEETINGS

SYSTEM GOAL: DECREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

When there is partnership (a true co-parenting alliance), birth families are more inclined to work their case plan, and children can be reunified.

MEETING GOAL: PROVIDES THE SYSTEM SUPPORTED GROUNDWORK FOR BIRTH AND FOSTER PARENTS/KINSHIP CAREGIVERS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

About getting needed information to do a great job taking care of child.

BIRTH FAMILY – FOSTER PARENT MEETINGS

- An informal, face-to-face meeting between caregivers that is facilitated by a partnership staff member. Meeting to occur when all caregivers can be present;
- To occur soon after child placement; within the first 2 weeks;
- A sharing of needed information so that caregivers do a great job taking care of child;
- Communication agreement created.
- Take place in a comforting environment.

CONSIDERATIONS TO BIRTH FAMILY – FOSTER PARENT MEETINGS

- Bio Parent not willing
- Foster Parent not willing
- Child has adoption goal
- Planning to go Expedited TPR
- No contact order
- Extreme mental health issues
- Parent not available
- Temporary or respite placement

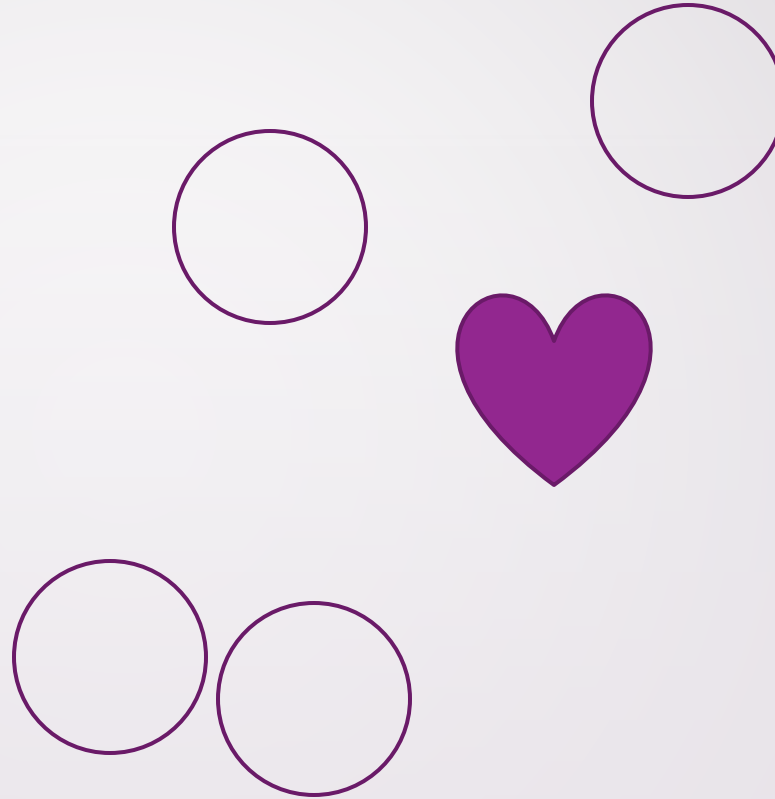
None of these considerations are:

- Children are better off with caregivers parenting in a silo
- Workers in the system are "too busy" to help coordinate the meeting
- "What if" the foster parent and birth parent like each other

YOUR CHILD'S "ECO-MAP"

Nearly all young children develop close bonds to at least two or more people. We call these "heart connections". Please put your child's name in the circle below. Think about the different adults in your child's life with whom he or she has a close bond or "heart" connection.

Draw circles that represent each of those people, putting each person's circle either close to, or if you wish a little farther away from, your child's circle so each one reflects how close your child feels to that person. Then connect each circle to your child's circle with a line. Remember: include everyone who supports or interacts with your child on a regular basis.



**THE JOURNEY TO CO-
PARENTING HAS ALREADY
BEGUN....**



GET INVOLVED!

- www.aspiremn.org/qpi
- www.Qpi4kids.org

- General Contact for QPI Information:
 - Kate Rickord: krickord@stdavidscenter.org
- Connections Action Work Group:
 - Jane Sherman: jsherman@stdavidscenter.org
 - Lisa Deputie: ldeputie@pcamn.org

